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TRENDS

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SOVIET ARMS IN PERU: The first known Moscow acknowledgement that Soviet military equipment has been supplied to Peru appeared in a Moscow commentary, broadcast in Portuguese and Spanish to Latin America on 22 and 23 March. Denying foreign press claims that Soviet military bases were being established in Peru, the commentary went on to note that Peruvian President Velasco Alvarado had conceded under questioning at a 13 March press conference that the Soviet Union had supplied Peru with arms. It quoted the president as saying that "the Peruvian Government had no intention of concealing its purchases of Soviet arms," and that Peru had been "forced to take this step because of the arms race started by neighbors." The commentary added that this was a defensive measure prompted by Chile's purchase of arms from the United States, West Europe, and Israel. Although Moscow is generally reluctant to publicize Soviet arms deliveries to other countries, the current departure is apparently aimed at reinforcing the image of Moscow's support for the Peruvian military government. The commentary indicated that the current campaign against Peru is being waged by "forces" seeking to discredit Peru's "progressive regime" and halt the socio-economic changes which have occurred in that country.

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